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PRESS RELEASE

The Mobile Money Contest to Tap into Afghan Students' Talents

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN | APRIL 22, 2012 – At today's ceremony at American University of Afghanistan (AUAF), Acting Mission Director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Jeffrey W. Ashley, Deputy Minister of Higher Education Sabir Khishky and the Association of Mobile Money Operators of Afghanistan (AMMOA) President Zahir Khoja announced the beginning of the nationwide contest for innovative applications on mobile money. The contest will be open from April 18 to June 17, 2012. The ceremony kick-starts a series of similar events at 33 public and private universities across 18 provinces in Afghanistan to invite students to take part in the contest.

"USAID is pleased to partner with the Ministry of Higher Education and AMMOA to expand the use of mobile money in Afghanistan and we look forward to seeing innovative applications proposed by university students from across the country," said USAID Acting Mission Director Jeffrey W. Ashley.

In May 2012, USAID helped four major mobile network operators offering mobile money services (AWCC, Etisalat, MTN and Roshan) to form AMMOA, industry association which will promote the use of mobile money services. AMMOA decided to tap into Afghan students' talents by organizing a nationwide contest that would encourage the student population to come up with ideas that will lead to innovative applications, relevant to the daily life of an Afghan citizen.

"The contest on mobile money is a creative approach to get our youth involved in new technology that will spur the development and economic growth of Afghanistan," said Deputy Minister Khishky.

Eight top-ranked students who conceptualize a mobile money application that is innovative, creative, and has practical relevance in business or social services will be rewarded with a cash prize of 250,000 AFN each, while their respective universities will receive five desktop computers with free internet connections for one year for their respective university libraries.

Each of the four major mobile network operators will choose two applications among the winners and implement them as a part of their mobile money implementation rollout. Students interested in participating in this contest can submit their applications during the campus events, or apply online through the AMMOA website: www.ammoa.org, or USAID Afghanistan Facebook page: www.facebook.com/USAIDAFGHANSITAN.

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